

Anti Bullying Work at Shire Oak CE Primary School

Any school that says it never has a problem with bullying is either highly unusual, or being disingenuous. As children develop and learn social skills they will, from time to time, make unkind choices and these can become a pattern of behaviour.

Curriculum and other learning opportunities

We think it is important to teach children to make the right choices and also to be vigilant to behaviours that could be bullying (towards themselves or others). We particularly teach them about the role of the *bystander* in bullying situations.

We use the document attached to the end of this report (Anti Bullying Charter and notes) in our displays, with staff and with children in assemblies to ensure a consistent message.

Once a year we have a focus week on the theme of Say No to Bullying. During the week we have:

- At least one whole school assembly
- SuperStar certificates with a focus on positive behaviours
- A visiting theatre group who work with (typically) Years 2 to 6 to get across the following messages:
 - The types of bullying there are (verbal, physical, excluding/emotional, cyber)
 - What bullies do
 - That bullies aren't fictional 'baddies' but ordinary people making bad choices (who may be being bullied themselves)
 - How bystanders let it happen
 - How to get help
- Activities in class (e.g. reading/writing poetry, circle time, storyboarding, drama (including hot seating), etc.
- The signing of the Anti Bullying Charter by children, staff and regular visitors (I know what bullying is, I know what bullying is not, I know what to do about bullying – tell!)
- A gift from school, linked to the theme. This is often shared or celebrated in a joint event. (e.g. 2016 a whistle blow in the playground for 'Make a noise about bullying' and in 2017 a torchlit gathering in the hall, planned by School Council, for 'Shine a light on bullying.') In recent years School Council have chosen friendship bracelets, highlighter pens, little notebooks and wristbands.

We think that teaching children what bullying is *not* is almost as important as explaining what it *is*. Children may make bad choices due to a falling out, impatience, anger, being too physical or not attentive enough. These may lead to warnings or red cards/straight to 5s but are different from bullying because they are not again and again, on purpose, to make the person feel bad. If children say these types of behaviour are bullying it lessens the impact of reporting real cases of it.

Preventative

We have various strategies in place to minimise the risk of bullying, particularly at playtimes or lunchtimes (which are the key risk times, due to the unstructured nature of the time). These include:

- A buddy bench so that children who are feeling left out or who don't know what to play can get help and company
- Peer Mediators. These are Year 5 and 6 children, trained by the Learning Mentor, who work at playtimes and lunchtimes to help children play amicably together, help resolve minor disputes and be vigilant to children who are feeling left out or upset. (In 2022-2023 we have been trialling a new approach with Y6 House Team Captains taking a lead on this work instead.)
- A rota of activities outside, along with the playground markings, so that there is always something to do.
- The activity line which can be used by children who find themselves (or choose to be) on their own.

- The Quiet Zone, for children who do not wish to engage with the more physically active areas of the playground.
- Lunchtime clubs and activities to provide children with a range of activities and choices if they find too much unstructured time difficult (e.g. Lego Club, Board Games Club, Walking Club, Games Club, Y6 Quiet Club, etc.)
- A structured timetable for children who frequently find it hard to make good behaviour choices at lunchtimes. This is sometimes designed to keep certain combinations of children separate so that powerful cliques cannot become more dominant. This can include accessing the clubs mentioned above, spending time at the Take It Easy Table in the dining hall before going out to the playground, staggered lunchtimes, playing inside on the computers, going to play out the front with an adult, etc.

Tackling bullying

We encourage children to tell. We explain that sometimes when they have told an adult outside about an issue, it isn't always clear that this was part of a wider problem, so they should tell their teacher inside. If that doesn't work they can escalate it by writing it in the Worry Box (which Mr Nash monitors every day and follows up.) If that still doesn't work they know they can talk to the headteacher. (Some children choose to take such concerns directly to Ms Devane or Mrs Maver.) We encourage children to tell on behalf of other children too.

Our behaviour recording sheets for serious incidents include the question 'In your opinion, could this be classed as bullying behaviour? Yes/No/Don't Know.' These sheets are checked on Fridays by the Pastoral Team so patterns and problems can be identified.

If bullying or potential bullying has been identified then we work swiftly to tackle the issue. We aim to achieve the following:

- Signal very clearly that this behaviour is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. (Bullying is always a 'Straight to 5')
- Record the incident that led to us finding out or the incidents described by the reporting child
- Create safety for the child or children at risk of bullying.
- Re-establish equality and allow children who have become used to thinking of a hierarchy to rebuild their friendship groups, without the influence of the child or children who have been bullying.
- Work with the bully (or bullies) to identify why they have been acting this way and how they can be helped to improve their behaviour.
- Make sure parents (of both bully/ies and victim/s) are informed and involved in resolving the issue
- Put in place a system for checking that the bullying behaviour has ceased.

For example: Two children were seeing themselves as 'gang leaders' who were then controlling the games their classmates could play (or couldn't play) and using verbal aggression and intimidating body language. They were sent 'Straight to 5' (the highest warning level) and their parents were informed. They were then banned from playing outside. Initially this was purely a consequence where they missed out on being outside whilst the rest of the class learned to play and sort things out amongst themselves again. After a while the time spent inside was used for restorative conversations, reflecting on their choices, how it made others feel and how they could move forward. Progress was discussed with parents, as well as talking about how they were responding at home. Then they were allowed to play games inside, with some of their peers so they could practise the necessary turn-taking and social skills. They were subsequently allowed outside for monitored periods of time during break and lunchtime to see if they were practising what was expected of them. Finally they were fully reintegrated, with regular checks done with classmates to ensure that the situation was still resolved.

What is bullying?

Bullying is...

Physical

- Hurting someone
- Spitting on someone
- Pulling down clothes
- Fighting someone
- Kicking someone

Verbal

- Insulting someone
- Saying horrible things to someone
- Saying horrible things about someone to their face or to spread rumours
- Saying horrible things about someone's family
- Saying things to embarrass someone
- Laughing at someone
- Being sarcastic to someone

Emotional

- Copying or mimicking someone
- Never letting someone play a game
- Making threatening gestures to someone
- Giving dirty looks to someone
- Hiding someone's things
- Breaking and spoiling things that belong to someone
- Taking things from someone and hiding them or throwing them around
- Writing notes about someone and passing them around

Cyber

- Writing horrible things in texts or emails
- Writing bad things on someone's Facebook wall
- Making threatening gestures to someone
- Sending horrible photos and films by text or email



What is not bullying?

Bullying is not...

- Falling out with someone
- Playing a trick on someone
- Things that are an accident
- Protecting someone
- Sticking up for yourself
- Being too rough in a game

Our school rules are **BE KIND, BE SAFE** and some of these things might not be bullying, but are still not ok in school.

What can we do about bullying?

We can stop bullying by...

- Telling bullies to “stop it!”
- Telling a teacher or other school grown up
- Sharing nicely and letting people join in our games
- Maybe telling the bullies how it makes us feel
- Walking away and ignoring them so they get bored
- Playing near a grown up
- Writing it down and putting it in the Worry Box
- Telling Miss Hinchliffe or Mr Nash
- Telling Ms Devane
- Telling parents as well
- Telling friends



TELL!